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ABSTRACT

This paper describes how a restructured and redesigned teacher training program at West Virginia University utilizes a strand approach to integrate special education learning outcomes into the 15 core courses required of all student teachers. Key elements of the new teacher training program include: a clear set of research-based program goals; closer collaboration with public schools; a 5-year dual degree program leading to a Bachelor's degree in a teaching discipline as well as a Master's degree in education; continuous interactive experiences with school children using the professional development schools model; and incorporation of multiculturalism, technology, and special education into pedagogy courses. Program content involves three integrated parts. They are the pedagogy component, liberal studies component, and the teaching discipline component. A matrix illustrates 10 major learning outcomes and competencies in the special education strand. It shows how these are integrated into the 15 core courses, and the degree of instruction (introductory, major coverage, or application) for each outcome. Suggestions for incorporating these special education outcomes into sample core courses are also provided. (Contains 20 references.) (DB)

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Expanding and Enriching a Teacher Training Program to Better

Meet Special Education Needs: A Strand Approach

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Expanding and Enriching a Teacher Training Program to Better Meet Special Education Needs: A Strand Approach

Abstract: This article describes how the expanded and enriched teacher training program at West Virginia University will be preparing future teachers to meet the special education needs of students in general classes. Using a strand approach, special education learning outcomes were developed and integrated into the 15 core courses required of all student teachers. The matrix illustrating these outcomes and courses also indicate the degree of instruction: introductory, major coverage, or application. Finally, suggestions for incorporating special education learning outcomes into sample core courses are provided.

EXPANDING AND ENRICHING A TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM TO BETTER MEET SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS: A STRAND APPROACH

Following the passage of Public Law 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act, now renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, series of Dean's Grants were funded across the country designed to better prepare general educators to meet the special needs of students with disabilities in regular classes (Behrens & Grosenick, 1978). It was assumed that deans in colleges of education would provide leadership in making changes in general teacher training programs to foster necessary accommodations. The changes were reported in the literature but few are well documented (Lombardi, Meadowcroft & Strasburger, 1982; Korinek, & Laycock, 1988). Considerable controversy existed (Cruickshank, 1977) and still exists (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995) about the efficacy of teaching students with special needs in general classes. Yet, there is little question that more and more students with disabilities are receiving the majority, if not all, of their education in general classes (CEC, 1995). The percentage of students with disabilities aged 6-21 receiving services in regular classrooms in 1992-93 was 39.81% as compared to 28.88% during the 1987-88 school year; an increase of nearly 11 percentage points in just five years. At the same time, the percentage of students educated outside the regular school building dropped from 6.4% to 4.5% during the same period (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). In addition, general educators are expected to be better prepared to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse cultural group of students. The concern about how to educate students who are culturally divergent has transcended many of the special education concerns (Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Dolan & Wasil, 1993). Educators (Tom, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Riley, 1995) and education organizations (Holmes Group, 1990; Viadero, 1992; National Education Goals Panel, 1994) are calling for a restructuring of teacher education preparation to better prepare all teachers for the challenges of diverse abilities and learning styles they will encounter in general classrooms.

Restructured Teacher Training Programs

As a response to improving the quality in teacher education programs, West Virginia University, with support from a major Benedum Grant, began in the summer of 1992 to restructure and redesign its teacher training programs. Over 250 faculty members and administrators from five schools and colleges at West Virginia University and from public schools in four county school systems worked collaboratively over three years to develop and field test major aspects of the new program. Its goal was to provide an exemplary program in teacher preparation. Key elements of the new teacher program include:

- a clear set of research-based program goals;
- closer collaboration with public schools;
- a five year dual degree program that leads to a bachelor's degree in a teaching discipline (e.g., mathematics, English, history, etc.) as well as a master's degree in education; and
- more selective and rigorous admission and retention standards and performance requirements that are relevant to successful program completion and effective teaching practices.

To assure excellent professional preparation, the program features:

- carefully sequenced learning experiences through which students progress in cohort groups;
- ample opportunities for mentoring from WVU faculty, public school teachers, and peers;
- specific liberal studies requirements focused on knowledge skills most essential for the well educated teacher;
- coursework and clinical experiences which foster active learning; critical, reflective thinking; current research knowledge; and state-of-the-art instructional technologies;
- well planned field experiences which begin early in students' programs and are based in "professional development schools" whose teachers are full partners with WVU faculty

in the effective preparation of teachers;

- significant integration of subject matter and professional education and
- a "professional development semester" in students' final term that includes advanced projects and graduate coursework in both subject matter and pedagogy (Report of Partners for Progress, 1994).

The content of the new program has three integrated parts. They are the pedagogy component, liberal studies component, and the teaching discipline component. Pedagogy classes help students understand: what to expect from teacher education as a major and career; how to tutor; how to manage and organize classrooms; and how to plan and apply effective teaching and learning strategies. Liberal studies are organized around three knowledge areas: humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics. The teaching discipline is the subject area the student intends to teach. Courses taken in the teaching discipline actively engage students in critical thinking appropriate to their subject fields and facilitate understanding of the structure of their discipline. Throughout the 10 semesters of the teacher training program, students will be enrolled in a series of 15 core courses guided by the University education faculty. A listing with brief description of each of these courses is provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Core Courses for New WVU Teacher Training Program

	<i>Course Description</i>
<i>Educ 1.</i>	Education Colloquium. 1 hr. Components of and requirements for the teacher preparation program, including specializations, professional organizations, requirements for admission to the major, avenues to program completion, and requirements for working with children and youth. (First offered Fall 95).
<i>Educ 100</i>	Professional Inquiry in Education. 3hr. PR. Educ1, Engl 1, and Engl. 2. An examination of students' perceptions about education and their socialization process relative to the following; aims and purpose of public education, students as learners, curriculum, and instruction. (First offered Spring 97).
<i>Educ 101</i>	Learning in Educational Settings 1, 2 hr. PR: admission to the major, grade of C or better in Educ 100, Psych 1 and one course in human development.

Examination and utilization (with initial emphasis upon examination) of learning models and paradigms from behavioral and cognitive perspectives; consideration of learner characteristics, attitudes, motivations, thinking process, and subject matter content affecting student learning. (First offered Fall 97).

Educ 102 Learning in Educational Settings 11. 2 hr. PR: Admission to major, grade of C or better in Educ 101 and Educ 112. Analysis and application of learning models and paradigms from behavioral and cognitive perspectives; consideration of learners characteristics, attitudes, motivations, thinking process, and subject matter content affecting student learning. (First offered Spring 98).

Educ 111 Practicum I. 1 hr. PR: Admission to the major, grade of C or better in Educ 100, concurrent with Educ 101. Application of models and paradigms of learning in content area through tutoring of individuals and small groups in assigned public school site. (First offered Fall 97).

Educ 112 Practicum II. 1 hr. PR: Admission to the major, grade of C or better in Educ 111, concurrent with Educ 102. Application of models and paradigms of learning in content area through tutoring of individuals and small groups in assigned public school site. (First offered Spring 98).

Educ 200 Instructional Design and Evaluation. 3hr. PR: Admission to major and a grade of C or better in both Educ 102 and Educ 112. Examination and demonstration of teacher behaviors required to plan classroom instruction, assess student learning, and evaluate instruction; emphasis on instruction, assessment, and evaluation to accommodate a wide range of student needs. (First offered Fall 98).

Educ 201 Managing and Organizing Learning Environments. 3 hr. PR: Admission to the major and a grade of C or better in Educ 200. Examination of research and practice in organizing and managing school learning environments to produce optimal learning; development of management systems congruent with personal philosophy, research, learner characteristics, and content area. (First offered Spring 99).

Educ 210 Practicum III 2hr. PR: grade of C or better in Educ 112, concurrent with Educ 200. Planning and implementing content area instruction, applying different instructional models and assessment techniques to small and large groups in an assigned public school site. (First offered in Fall 98).

Educ 211 Practicum IV. 2hr. PR: grade of C or better in Educ 210, concurrent with Educ 201. Planning and implementing content area instruction, applying different instructional models and assessment techniques to small and large groups in an assigned public school site. (First offered in Fall 99).

Educ 212 Professional Internship. 12 hr. PR: grade of C or better in Educ 211, achievement of required grade point average in prerequisite course work, satisfactory completion of State Board of Education examination requirements, recommendation of the faculty, acceptance in the assigned school site, and positive evidence that the application meets requirements of physical condition, emotional stability, and communication competence necessary for performance of duties as a teacher. Interns are expected to avoid other employment commitments. Full time professional internship in public school teaching; satisfactory completion is required for recommendation for professional licensure

and graduation with an education degree. (First offered Fall 99).

- Educ 300* Teacher as Researcher. 3hr. PR: concurrent with Educ 212. Preparation for action research; documentation of observations of researchable topics in school settings and completion of an extended classroom-based study. (First offered Fall 99).
- Educ 301* Context of Education. 3 hr. PR: grade of C or better in Educ 212. Critical, analytical, and reflective thinking on schooling through the integration of social, cultural, historical, philosophical, and political perspectives; examination of the contexts of students' own educational practice. (First offered Spring 2000).
- Educ 302* Professional Identity: Teacher as Leader. 3 hr. PR: grade of C or better in Educ 212. Preparation for professional development as educational leaders. Examination, synthesis, and application of literature on teacher development, autonomy, and school reform. (First offered Spring 2000).
- Educ 311* Instructional Practicum. 3 hr. PR: grade of C or better in Educ 212. Teaching and mentoring in public schools and university settings, collaborative (students and faculty) design of individualized practicum contracts. (First offered Spring 2000).
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These courses were developed by transdisciplinary teams and include three major strands addressing multiculturalism, technology and special education. The major purpose of this article is to present the special education strand as a way to better prepare general teachers for responsible inclusion. The basis for this decision was, if responsible inclusion is to be an integrated part of general education, than responsible inclusion must also be an integrated part of all teacher training. This approach is quite different from many teacher training programs that either require general educators to take a special education course in their training programs or incorporate special education modules in a few of their foundation classes (Swartz, Hidalgo & Hays, 1991-92). Further, the focus of training is on specific teaching and learning situations rather than on broad philosophical issues of inclusion, or training that just describes categories of disability generically. Teachers really want to know how to meet the needs of specific students who will be included in their classrooms (Roach, 1995).

Special Education Matrix

Adapting the matrix developed by Long and Schwenn (1995) as a base and reviewing the international teacher training standards developed by the Council for Exceptional Children (1995), the authors developed a list of learning outcomes that are related to responsible inclusion and expected of all future teachers graduating from West Virginia University. After agreeing on the outcome list, each of the authors determined which core courses were most appropriate for which competencies. A consensus was reached and it was determined as to whether the competency was at an introduction level, major coverage level, or application level. Table 2 provides the matrix integrating outcomes, degree of coverage, and core course offerings. It is beyond the scope of this article to present the modifications recommended for all the core courses. However, sample suggestions for select core courses are provided.

Integrating the Special Education Strand

In the Educ 101 course, Learning in Educational Settings, potential general teachers will receive major coverage in the foundations of education of pupils with special needs. They also will receive an introduction on how pupils with diverse cognitive, motor and/or behavior needs learn and how to begin individualizing instruction. Since this is one of the first core courses that gives special education major attention, it was recommended that week two of this course be devoted to learners with special needs. Students will become familiar with the legal, moral and research factors associated with least restrictive environments. They will be responsible for understanding the search and serve process as well as their responsibility in promoting responsible inclusion. Not only will they be exposed to some of the special needs associated with specific types of disabilities but will discuss strategy ideas on how to meet these needs. Modifying the curriculum and lessons will also be discussed. In addition to readings and guided lessons, students will be expected to develop a teaching plan for a hypothetical case involving a student with special needs enrolled in a general education program. This will assist them in preparation for their simultaneous

site based tutoring experience. A useful video supporting this strand is *Families, Friends, Future* (Comforty Mediaconcepts, 1993).

Educ 200, Instructional Design and Evaluation, will examine and demonstrate teacher behaviors required to plan classroom instruction, assess student learning, and evaluate instruction to accommodate a wide range of student needs. Students will critique classroom resources and materials from differing instructional design perspectives. The course will largely focus on actual classroom teaching and learning situations. Specific objectives as outlined on the course syllabus are appropriate for all learners in the classroom and respect differences in culture, learning styles, and exceptionalities. Prospective teachers will learn to develop lesson plans and adapt curricular materials and methods for diverse pupils and select media and technology appropriate to instructional goals and objectives written on the student's IEP. The assessment strategies they will examine will include standardized tests, portfolio assessment, objective and essay teacher-made tests, performance graphing, alternative assessment methods and formative/summative evaluations. Essential to the course will be learning to evaluate how differing physical arrangements (e.g., seating, traffic flow), support educational productivity of students with special needs. Inherent in all activities will be their applicability of helping all students learn. The West Virginia State Department of Education's recently developed video on inclusion, *Schools for All Children*, would be an appropriate visual aid in this course.

Courses 211 and 212 are taken concurrently with Instructional Design and Evaluation and Managing and Organizing Learning Environments. These courses are practicum teaching experiences designed to provide students the opportunity to plan and implement content area instruction in an actual public school setting. In at least one of these practicum locations, students are to demonstrate teaching competencies by providing instruction to pupils with diverse cognitive, motor and/or behavioral needs. Each is responsible for validating his/her ability to collect, document, and analyze performance information through systematic observation. Students will also assess pupil's learning to establish goals and objectives that are appropriate for that individual.

Students will evidence instructional material adaptations, teaching technique modifications, and learning strategy implementation in accordance with meeting the needs of individual learners. Furthermore, these courses encourage students to attend School Based Assistance Team and Individual Education Plan meetings that may occur during the practicum period to further enhance their knowledge of special education practices.

Professional Development Schools

The new program requires continuous interactive experiences with school children. This comes in the form of the school-university partnership associated with professional development schools (PDS). Public school faculty and staff members work collaboratively with university faculty and staff to provide exemplary learning experiences for the novice teacher. Because student teachers will no longer be placed in a great many schools, the selection of PDS sites was given a great deal of study.⁶ One criterion was that the schools were committed to a quality education for all their students including those with special needs. All teachers training at PDS will have the opportunity to interact and teach students with special needs prior to completing their program. Coupled with the special education strand integrated in all the core courses, future elementary and secondary teachers, graduating from West Virginia University with a bachelor's and master's degree at the same time, will be better prepared to meet special education needs of students in their classes.

Discussion

At the present time the majority of practicing teachers have worked primarily in situations where special educators were largely responsible for providing the needs of students with disabilities while general educators concentrated on the needs of average students. At times it seemed neither were responsible for the at-risk or slow learners who did not meet the criteria for obtaining special help; but who are nonetheless every bit as much in need of compensatory

strategies which have been available in the field of special education. West Virginia University's new teacher education program bridges this gap by infusing a special education teacher training strand throughout its program. Students not only gain the skills and knowledge necessary for teaching all students through coursework, but they also participate in five different practicum experiences to demonstrate their teaching competencies. The university's partnership with Professional Development Schools provides a vital link to this process. Each school provides future teachers a model of successful teaching practices and a site where they can become increasingly responsible in their roles as members of the school's educational team. This school-university collaborative relationship provides meaningful opportunities to reinforce and evaluate the future teacher's ability to transfer formal knowledge to classroom experiences.

To successfully achieve this holistic teacher training approach, university faculty members, represented by a wide range of disciplines of study offered, established forums to support the collaborative interactions necessary for developing and implementing the new program. Dialog among faculty members in these forums have resulted in providing both summative and formative evaluations from a variety of perspectives. Through the building of mutual professional understanding, it has become quite clear that teachers can accept the fact that every student, including those with special needs, is every teacher's responsibility. Collaborative efforts, on behalf of students with special needs, may have originated in the social context of equality, and may be driven by litigation based on the least restrictive environment, but it is long overdue.

TABLE 2
SPECIAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES AND KNOWLEDGE
FOR THE GENERAL TEACHER

College of Human Resources and Education
Teacher Education Program: Core Courses
and Special Education Strand

Educ	1	Education Colloquium
Educ	100	Professional Inquire in Education
Educ	101	Learning in Educational Settings I
Educ	102	Learning in Educational Settings II
Educ	111	Practicum I
Educ	112	Practicum II
Educ	200	Instructional Design and Evaluation
Educ	201	Managing and Organizing Learning Environments

Educ	210	Practicum III
Educ	211	Practicum IV
Educ	212	Professional Internship
Educ	300	Teacher as a Researcher
Educ	301	Context of Education
Educ	302	Professional Identity: Teacher as Leader
Educ	311	Instructional Practicum

Key to Numbering Code

- 1 = Introduction
2 = Major Coverage
3 = Application

Prepared by
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	<i>Educ</i> <i>1</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>100</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>101</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>102</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>111</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>112</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>200</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>201</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>210</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>211</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>212</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>300</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>301</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>302</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>311</i>
1. Acquire knowledge and expertise in the foundations of education of pupils' with special education needs.															
(A) Discuss the shared and unique responsibilities of education for serving pupils with special education needs.		1	2	2					3	3	3				
(B) Describe issues in definition and identification procedures for individuals with special needs.			2	2							3				
(C) Understand assurances and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement for students with special needs.			2	2							3				
2. Demonstrate knowledge of how pupils with diverse cognitive, motor, and/or social/behavior needs learn.															
(A) Demonstrate the curricular, instructional, and/or technological modifications/ adaptations which can be made by educators to support pupils with diverse cognitive, motor, and/or social/behavioral needs who require special education.			1	1	3	3	2	2	3	3	3				

	<i>Educ</i> <i>1</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>100</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>101</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>102</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>111</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>112</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>200</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>201</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>210</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>211</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>212</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>300</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>301</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>302</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>311</i>
(B) Select, modify, and adapt curriculum content and materials that engage pupils in meaningful, active, and applied learning experiences in areas such as academics, career preparations, and social competence according to characteristics of learner.			1	1	3	3	2		3	3	3				
(C) Select media and technology appropriate to instructional goals and objectives (e.g. computer assisted technology, assistive technology) written or the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).		1	1	1	3	3	2	2	3	3	3				
(D) Develop lesson plans and adapt curricular, materials, and methods for average and diverse pupils (i.e., gender, gifted to low functioning, various disabilities, high to low SES, varying learning styles, culturally and linguistically diverse, and social problems specific to the community.			1	1	3	3	2		3	3	3				
(E) Use task analysis error pattern analysis to determine how to revise curriculum and instruction.			1	1	3	3	2		3	3	3				
3. Demonstrate the ability to use appropriate assessment data to plan and implement instruction to students with special education needs.															
(A) Use assessment information to establish goals and objectives that are appropriate for an individual pupil.				1	2	3	2		3	3	3				
(B) Collect, document, and analyze performance information through systematic observations and recordings of pupil learning, behavior patterns, and responses in the areas of social, developmental, functional, academic, and/or vocational behaviors.				2	2	3	2		3	3	3				
(C) Determine instructional, functional, and developmental needs of pupils through the use of curriculum-based assessments and similar tools that allow for comparison of current performance with criterion outcomes.				1	2	3	2		3	3	3				

	<i>Educ 1</i>	<i>Educ 100</i>	<i>Educ 101</i>	<i>Educ 102</i>	<i>Educ 111</i>	<i>Educ 112</i>	<i>Educ 200</i>	<i>Educ 201</i>	<i>Educ 210</i>	<i>Educ 211</i>	<i>Educ 212</i>	<i>Educ 300</i>	<i>Educ 301</i>	<i>Educ 302</i>	<i>Educ 311</i>
(D) Develop formal and informal alternative types of assessments (e.g. portfolio assessment, curriculum based assessment).				1	2	3	2		3	3	3	2			
4. Demonstrate the ability to plan safe, positive, and supportive learning environments for students with special education needs.															
(A) Evaluate how differing physical arrangements (e.g. seating, traffic flow) support educational productivity of students with special needs.							2	2			3				
(B) Demonstrate the skill of managing simultaneous and different curriculum activities.								2			3				
(C) Develop and implement a plan for involving parents in the instructional process.								2			3				
5. Demonstrate knowledge of principles of instructional effectiveness and the ability to apply these within a variety of models of teaching.															
(A) Maintain and communicate high, appropriate expectations for all pupils including gifted and others requiring special education.		1	1		2	2					3				
(B) Maximize the amount of time pupils engage in learning activities (i.e. time on task).				2	2	2					3				
(C) Provide pupils with opportunities to experience high success rates during acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, and generalization stages of learning.				2	2	2					3				
(D) Teach generalization of skills and transfer of knowledge.				2	2	2					3				
(E) Assist pupils in developing learning strategies and independent study behaviors.				2	3	3					3				
(F) Teach and model problem solving strategies for pupils.			1	2	3	3					3				

	<i>Educ 1</i>	<i>Educ 100</i>	<i>Educ 101</i>	<i>Educ 102</i>	<i>Educ 111</i>	<i>Educ 112</i>	<i>Educ 200</i>	<i>Educ 201</i>	<i>Educ 210</i>	<i>Educ 211</i>	<i>Educ 212</i>	<i>Educ 300</i>	<i>Educ 301</i>	<i>Educ 302</i>	<i>Educ 311</i>
(G) Teach and model critical thinking skills for pupils.			1	2	3	3					3				
6. Demonstrate the ability to implement individual and group behavior management procedures.															
(A) Modify the learning environment to manage inappropriate behaviors.			1	1				2	3	3	3				
(B) Develop a repertoire of ethical strategies to increase appropriate or decrease inappropriate pupil behaviors according to their special needs.			1	1				2	3	3	3				
(C) Involve parents and pupils in the establishment of behavioral programs, self-recording, self-management, and social skills.				1	3	3		2	3	3	3				
7. Acquire knowledge of the principles related to development of collaborative relationships with colleagues and parents.															
(A) Model communication, consultation, collaboration, and problem-solving skills that can be used to develop instructional and management procedures for all students including gifted and other requiring special education.				1		2			3	3	3				
(B) Participate as a member of a transdisciplinary team in activities related to planning, implementing, and evaluating individualized instructional and related programs for a pupil.				2	3	3			3	3	3				
(C) Demonstrate knowledge of how to encourage and assist families to become active participants in the educational team.					3	3		3			3				

	<i>Educ 1</i>	<i>Educ 100</i>	<i>Educ 101</i>	<i>Educ 102</i>	<i>Educ 111</i>	<i>Educ 112</i>	<i>Educ 200</i>	<i>Educ 201</i>	<i>Educ 210</i>	<i>Educ 211</i>	<i>Educ 212</i>	<i>Educ 300</i>	<i>Educ 301</i>	<i>Educ 302</i>	<i>Educ 311</i>
8. Acquire knowledge of general management the roles and utilization of paraprofessionals and volunteers in an instructional program.															
								2	3	3	3				
9. Cooperatively develop, implement, and evaluate an individualized education program plan, school based assistance plan, and individualized transition plan.															
				2					3	3	3				
10. Participate in the development and monitoring of the school's strategic plan for inclusion of gifted and exceptional students into the general classroom.															
									3	3	3				2

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